# THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF MASS LAYOFF:

# POLICY AND PROGRAMMATIC IMPLICATIONS

# FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF WORKER WELL-BEING

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## Introduction

Three hundred thousand workers have been laid-off in the automobile and affiliated industries, most of whom face permanent displacement: "...even the highest estimates anticipate a gain of only about one-half the jobs lost during 1980." (Detroit Free Press, January 25 and May 6, 1981.) Massive lay-offs are not at all unusual in the auto industry but two factors make the current crisis uniquely devastating. First, there has recently occurred an abrupt shift in consumer demand toward smaller, more fuel efficient automobiles - which require less labor to manufacture. Furthermore, American auto makers were slow in responding to these new market trends and in the interim have suffered a sharply reduced volume of sales. Increasing use of robotics in the auto industry further reduces the need for workers. A second unique feature is the large number of white-collar workers who have been displaced in contrast to previous periods when job instability was a problem faced overwhelmingly by blue-collar auto workers. Chrysler, for example, has "slashed its non-production employment from 43,000 to 24,000." (Detroit Free Press, October 26, 1980.)

The problem of massive unemployment in this industry is likely to create a slew of secondary but equally important problems. For job loss results in two main precipitators of psychosocial stress: loss of the work role and economic deprivation. As we shall see in this paper, the availability



of suitable alternatives to the work role as a basis for establishing and maintaining identity and self-esteem is limited, especially for males. By contrast, actual economic deprivation can be readily reduced through the provision of unemployment benefits. In fact, those workers who are eligible for supplemental unemployment benefits (SUB) may receive up to 95 percent of their former after-tax wages. (Shostak, 1980, p. 31.) But the duration of eligibility for these benefits is quite limited and the Michigan Employment Security Commission reports that the rate of exhaustion of unemployment benefits is already running about 20,000 cases per month. Significantly, only a tiny proportion of these families are showing up on the welfare rolls - about five to ten percent. (Detroit Free Press, January 11, 1981.) Many would not qualify until they had liquidated most of their hard-earned assets. There are indications of growing rates of arson as laid-off workers try to cash-in on insurance policies. How the remainder survive is undocumented but one might expect to find instances of people sharing quarters and receiving loans from relatives and friends, participating in the "irregular economy", sending other family members to work, and migrating to other areas.

Stresses caused by financial inadequacy and loss of the work role appear to be giving rise to evidence of serious social and psychological strain. Official statistics for Michigan already show marked increases in various indicators

of distress: child abuse jumped 37 percent in 1980, substance abuse climbed 10.4 percent in 1980, and suicide rose 27 percent in 1979. (Ann Arbor News, March 15, 1981.) Further compounding the problem are severe cutbacks in State and Federal funds which have diminished the capacity of health and human service agencies to respond effectively to these stress-induced social pathologies. For instance, Judson Stone, Director of the Six Area Community Mental Health Center, complains that despite an unprecedented and overwhelming influx of unemployed clients seeking help for problems including numerous cases of marital disorganization and alcoholism, the agency has been forced to lay-off 30 members of its own staff and close intake due to reduced availability of funding (personal communication).

The issues highlighted in the foregoing discussion demand study by concerned policy-oriented social scientists. Findings from social research are needed to enable policy makers to assess human costs and benefits inherent in economic and social policy decisions which affect the job security of multitudes of people. By way of illustration, Business Week, (May 22, 1978), summarizes the employment dimensions of current fiscal policy initiatives: "Achieving a drop of 1 percent point in the inflation rate through macroeconomic policy may entail a 2-point, 2-million person increase in the unemployment rate (and a loss of $100 billion worth of output)." Some researchers are claiming enormous long term costs to society from rises in the rate



of unemployment, due to the harmful effects of negative employment status change on individual functioning. For example, M. Harvey Brenner has determined from aggregate time series analyses that the sustained 1.4 percent increase in the unemployment rate from 1970 to 1975 cost the country $21 billion as a result of lost income due to illness and mortality, and in expenses incurred through increased admissions to state prisons and mental hospitals, and through added public outlays for jobless and welfare payments. (Brenner,1977.)

The present literature review is intended to contribute insights to the policy debate. A substantial body of empirical and conceptual studies on the social impacts of unemployment is critically analyzed in this paper. An attempt is made to synthesize findings from diverse disciplinary approaches to the problem and arrive at intelligent conclusions with regard to the nature and dynamics of the impacts of job loss, and to propose policies and programs to lessen the negative impacts. Because our interest is primarily in how macroeconomic change affects the well-being of masses of workers, the discussion will be limited to problems of unemployment precipitated by plant closings or other instances of mass layoff. This approach has the further advantage of ruling-out a priori the alternative and potentially confounding hypothesis that unemployment is caused by individual mental, physical, or other disorder or deficiency.

While a variety of social impacts will be reported in summary form, more intensive analysis will be limited to

mental health effects, family disorganization, and worklife instability.

The analysis will follow a format organized to emphasize the policy implications of the nature, dimensions and dynamics of the problem of mass unemployment and its impacts. The first task is to identify the population subgroups which are particularly at risk of job loss and prolonged unemployment and hardship during economic downturns. Then, a "case" will be established for studying with closer scrutiny the psychosocial processes accounting for the negative effects of unemployment by first reviewing the literature which consistently shows an aggregate level association between rates of unemployment and a host of secondary social problems.

The underlying causal linkages between job loss and secondary impacts will be elaborated using a psychosocial stress model. Literature identifying and defining unemployment as a source of stress will be carefully examined. Factors which precipitate, mediate, and reinforce the objective and subjective experience of the stress of job loss will be seen to be of particular importance for the development of preventive and ameliorative policy proposals. The social impacts of job loss will be regarded as positive and negative coping responses which occur with regularity in a sequence of phases of adaptation and adjustment, again with implications for policy and programmatic intervention. The analysis will conclude with additional recommendations for ameliorative policies and programs, and for further study where indicated.



## II Problem Statement

### A. Workers at Risk of Unemployment

The first step in trying to estimate the social impact of unemployment is to identify the characteristics of workers most at risk of being laid-off and of suffering prolonged unemployment during economic downturns. Even a brief review of the literature readily reveals that the probability of unemployment is greatest for those workers comprising the more disadvantaged sectors of the labor force. Ferman and Gardner (1979, pp. 206-207) show that:

> "Higher-level jobs tend to be dominated by prime age white males and low-level jobs by disproportionate numbers of women, teenagers, and prime age black males... (B)lacks have more frequent spells of unemployment at a given level of aggregate unemployment than do whites. Blacks and non-skilled workers are more likely at any time to become unemployed than are whites or more highly skilled workers. At any given aggregate unemployment rate, periods of unemployment decline with age for all race and sex groups; within each age group, white males have the lowest number of such periods."

Hence we see that white males, already disproportionately advantaged through their domination of high status and well-paying occupations, are normally least vulnerable to the threat of unemployment. More detailed examination of risks of unemployment by occupational level further confirm the cumulative disadvantages faced by workers with lower status occupational characteristics:

> "It has been observed that unemployment rates for blue-collar workers, operatives, non-farm laborers, and craft workers are more cyclically sensitive than those for white-collar workers,

professional and technical workers, and managers. Additional direct evidence appears in the finding that the employment of production workers in manufacturing industries fluctuates proportionately more over the cycle than does the employment of managerial or supervisory employees. Within particular industries, the employment of lower-wage workers is found to be more cyclically sensitive." (Ferman and Gardner, 1979, p. 205.)

The impacts of job loss on the lower socioeconomic and lower occupational status worker are multiplied when the family is taken as the unit of analysis. Schlozman and Verba (1979) found in their national survey of the impacts of unemployment, using a systematic random sample of the metropolitan labor force, that two-thirds of the unemployed (N=571) were the main wage earners for their households, and that forty-five percent of this group had dependent children. In view of similar findings, Moen (1979, 1980) argues forcefully that present methods of collecting unemployment statistics which merely ascertain the employment status characteristics of individuals are sorely inadequate because they fail to account for impacts on families. Using data from ISR's Panel Study on Income Dynamics, to study the family impacts of unemployment during the 1975 recession, she found that 17 percent of main household breadwinners having families with children under age 18 became unemployed for some period during the recession, and 58 percent of these were jobless for fifteen weeks or more. Moreover, this group appears to suffer from persistent hardship, insofar as 47.5 percent of them had also experienced unemployment during 1974. The probability of lengthy unemployment among heads of households



with dependent children during the 1975 recession was greatest for female heads of households and expecially for those with children under 6 years of age or between 13 to 18 years of age. Male heads of households with children under 6 years of age were next most likely to experience lengthy unemployment. Generally speaking, those heads of households with dependent children who were more likely to experience lengthy unemployment (15 weeks or more) included women as opposed to men, blacks in contrast to whites, blue-collar workers compared to white-collar workers and workers with less than twelve years of education. (Moen, 1979.) This evidence persuasively supports Moen's call for new kinds of measures of unemployment to account for the hardships created by job loss that befall not just the worker but his family as well.

The felt impact of family hardships is substantiated by Schlozman and Verba's (1979) finding that unemployed main wage earners with dependent children were more dissatisfied with their income, family life, and life accomplishments than were the unemployed without children adding to the already greater dissatisfaction expressed by the unemployed as a whole with each of these subjective quality of life indicators in comparison to the employed.

The foregoing discussion describes the probability of job loss and prolonged unemployment for a variety of affected groups using data from national cross sectional surveys. Additional data from more localized studies are useful for understanding unique features of displacement in the context

of a plant closing or other instance of mass layoff. Since our interest is focused particularly on the impacts of job loss in the faltering automobile and associated industries, it is appropriate that we report characteristics of long-term unemployed workers who were displaced in the partial closing of a plant in an affiliated heavy manufacturing industry - the Youngstown Sheet and Tube steel mill operations shutdown in Youngstown, Ohio. Buss and Hofstetter (1981) surveyed a random probability sample of steelworkers at Youngstown Sheet and Tube (N=282), which included 144 workers displaced approximately six months prior to the interviews by the closing of the Campbell Works early in 1978. A comparison group of 80 autoworkers was selected by random sampling from the nearby Lordstown, Ohio General Motors plant. The sample of steelworkers, all male, included subsamples of: workers who remained employed at the mill (N=138); workers who had been terminated but had been able to retire early because of their status at the mill (N=36); workers who had been terminated but found other employment (N=50); and workers who had been terminated and remained unemployed (N=60). Many of the latter had already exhausted their unemployment benefits at the time of the interview, about six months after the closing.

An analysis of variance was performed to ascertain statistically significant ($p<.05$) differences between the five groups on demographic characteristics of education, race, age, income, and marital status. No differences between groups were found for race or marital status. However, displaced workers who



were still unemployed had a significantly higher level of education, were much younger and earned less income than any other group. Those workers still employed at Sheet and Tube had exactly the opposite characteristics. Displaced workers who were re-employed elsewhere resembled the continuously employed except for lower earnings on their new jobs. Early retirees resembled the continuously employed except that they were somewhat older, had less education, and reported a lower income from their pensions.

What is striking about these findings is the implication that young men, presumably those most likely to have young, dependent children, were most likely to be displaced and to suffer long term unemployment, in spite of relatively high levels of education. Seniority and work experience were apparently the characteristics of blue-collar men who were most resistant to displacement and most successful in finding new jobs.

These findings for Youngstown Sheet and Tube support those of Moen (1979, 1980) and Schlozman and Verba (1979), with the exception of race, which apparently made no difference in this case because of union protections against discrimination. Parnes and King (1977) in their analysis of middle-aged male job losers in the National Longitudinal Studies, also found no evidence of racial discrimination in the likelihood of displacement for men with substantial job tenure, apparently regardless of union membership. Thus, they find that the best protection against displacement that workers have is seniority and that this is enhanced by employment in

a unionized firm. Not surprisingly, then, Parnes and King show that while there were no differences between displaced workers and a matched control group on education or occupational level, the displaced nonetheless had "less attractive" jobs to begin with, as these men were characterized by lower earnings and annual incomes, higher incidence of pre-displacement periods of unemployment, greater dislike for their jobs, and were much less likely to be covered by pensions on their jobs. These factors seem to suggest that employment in presumably non-unionized shops offers both less job stability and less desirable conditions of work, again showing that those workers who are already relatively disadvantaged are more likely to suffer displacement and prolonged unemployment.

A plausible way to account for these variable probabilities of unemployment is to examine patterns of "skidding and bumping" as workers look for new jobs in the local labor market during economic crisis (Ferman and Gardner, 1979). "Bumping" describes the displacement and replacement of workers by others with greater seniority or other human capital; "skidding" refers to the taking of jobs lower in the occupational status hierarchy which offer less income or fewer fringe benefits, or less protection from arbitrary employment practices. Evidence we have reviewed shows that certain already disadvantaged groups, already at the bottom of the occupational pyramid, are more sensitive to displacement



and thus to downward social mobility as a result of these patterns of skidding and bumping which rebound throughout local labor markets during economic crises such as that precipitated by a major plant closing.

Another reason relatively less advantaged workers are more likely to suffer unemployment during economic downturns is the greater sensitivity of small firms within a given industry sector, (which are more likely not to be unionized) to the threat of macro-economic crises. Mick (1975), in his analysis of trends in plant closings in rubber and plastics industries in Connecticut from 1954 to 1970, concluded that in absolute numbers the most closings occured in the smallest plants, employing from one to nine workers. (However, two-thirds of eliminated jobs during this period were accounted for by closings of plants employing 50 to 249 workers.) Significantly, Mick adds that, "At best only one-fourth of organized labor appears to be covered by any provision related to plant movement and shutdowns. And, relatively speaking, these workers are more likely to be concentrated in larger bargaining units (over 10,000 employees) than in smaller ones." (Mick, 1975, p. 207.)

The ripple affects of a major plant closing extend well beyond patterns of skidding and bumping within the affected industry itself. Cottrell (1951) describes the widespread impacts of technological change on a railroad town originally built as a "division point" to service steam locomotives, which required frequent adjustment. Introduction of longer

range diesel locomotives rendered the town's servicing function obsolete, with devastating impact upon virtually all sectors of the community's workforce. Within the railroad industry, workers hurt most included those who could not transfer seniority to other work locations, and workers whose jobs were made obsolete. Drastic reduction of opportunities for employment in this single industry town devastated local merchants without customers, bondholders unable to foreclose on a dead town, churches whose congregations disappeared, and homeowners forced to sell at a considerable loss - if any sale were possible at all. Least harmed were those firms Cottrell calls the "nomads": chain-store outlets which simply relocate or charge costs against more profitable outlets.

Technological changes and the failing competitive position of the American auto industry have threatened cities like Detroit which are heavily dependent on the auto industry with effects similarly touching upon all sectors of the local economic structure. Newsweek (May 4, 1981) reports that:

> "Unless it quickly raises money and cuts expenses, Detroit could be bankrupt by July 1... The auto industry's slump and the influx of Japanese imports have devastated Motown - raising the unemployment rate to more than twice the national average and threatening the solvency of the State of Michigan. Middle class residents who hadn't already fled the city are eyeing Sun Belt jobs, ...and about half of the residents who remain receive some form of public assistance. With expenditures rising at twice the rate of revenues in recent years, Detroit has already cut services sharply and laid off more than 1,000 police officers - but the worst is yet to come. Frozen out of the bond markets, the city is set to end its fiscal year with a $119.6 million deficit and will start fiscal 1982 short another $150 million ...Mayor Coleman Young told the city council a fortnight ago,...'We are at the very edge of an abyss.'"



## B. The Social Costs of Unemployment
### Introductory Remarks

The reader may wonder why one should bother examining the secondary social problems resulting from the stress of job loss in an analysis aimed at recommending policies and programs to mitigate the effects of macro-economic crises as they affect citizens of local communities. For, obviously the most direct manner of preventing the emergence of these stresses and their effects is to enact and enforce a national "full employment" policy ensuring adequate employment of all members of the labor force. However, at present it is increasingly evident that the American taxpayer and his representatives in the Federal Government are unwilling to subsidize needed counter-cyclical employment programs and and programs targeting loans and grants to distressed communities and industries. In fact, enormous program cuts loom darkly for the victims of the present recession, including cuts in counter-cyclical manpower programs such as CETA, as well as basic supportive services such as Food Stamps, and block grants and loans to troubled cities. A new philosophy reigns in the halls of government today much akin to Darwinian "survival of the fittest" notions of free enterprise and social justice. Whatever the sources of this political trend - we cannot effectively deal with them here - its implications for less advantaged sectors of Michigan's workforce during this recession are potentially staggering. Some hopeful commentators feel that the American public's compassion will finally be aroused when it becomes apparent that the recession's victims may not survive without further

help. As Corinne Gibb, Detroit's chief city planner states:

> "The blue-collar segment of American society will diminish very rapidly...That indicates a need for massive, fast retraining...That is an issue the federal government can't be allowed to ignore. What will make (federal policy) change is the pure public outcry which is bound to develop as the situation becomes perfectly clear, as the urgency and great scope of the problem clarifies, which I think will happen over this summer. We will be running out of unemployment benefits, special union layoff benefits, simultaneously with drastic cuts in food stamp programs and other sorts of carrying devices so that large numbers of people will be up against the fact of possible starvation." (Detroit Free Press, May 3, 1981.)

Thus, while current socio-political trends reflect the general hostility of much of the American public to a socialized economy which would de facto eliminate the cyclical threats of job loss endemic to a free market economy, there remains a strong element of American popular concern that all citizens - employed or otherwise - be able to live at least with some rudiments of dignity. (See, for instance, Lee Rainwater, What Money Buys, 1974.) This tradition in American public opinion suggests that the public and its political representatives are most likely to be moved to ameliorative action by evidence that the unemployed need help to survive with dignity. And it is for this reason that this paper will devote the bulk of the remaining analysis to evidence of the indignity of the effects of job loss, to the causal processes which account for these impacts, and to the development of recommendations for ameliorative policies and programs. Josephina Figueira-McDonough (1978) frames the research issues surrounding this



public policy issue thusly:

> "If the cause of psychological strain (unemployment) cannot be removed, then the alternative is to identify the life circumstances of the unemployed that can be changed to promote their mental well-being. Such identification is a prerequisite for the planning of meaningful services." (Figueira-McDonough, 1978, p. 395.)

Social Impacts of Unemployment: Aggregate Level Findings

In this section of the paper we will establish a case for subsequently studying more closely the precesses underlying the social effects of unemployment by reviewing the literature showing an association between aggregate level measures of macro-economic change and a number of secondary social problems. Aggregate level studies implicitly assume and oftentimes lend support to Emile Durkheim's fundamental thesis linking anomic social conditions with increased rates of incidence of individual psychological disorder as well as disordering of social groups. (Miller, 1979.) Anomie refers to a societal condition of disintegration in which certain groups and individuals find themselves unable to attain the social and economic rewards and statuses which are culturally prescribed and expected. In a seminal formulation of this theory, Merton (1938) contends that the individual experiences anomie as a stressful disjuncture between socially prescribed goals for pecuniary and occupational success and access to institutional means to achieve them. The frustrated individual, depending on his own predispositions and opportunity structure, may adjust or

adapt through one or more of several basic coping responses: innovation, ritualism, retreatism, or rebellion. More specifically, the "innovator" is one who tries to achieve cultural goals through unconventional means, such as crime or participation in the "irregular economy" - defined as "work that is unrecorded and unmeasured by any private or public monitoring agency and which entails a cash exchange" (Dow, 1977). The "ritualist" is one who despairs of upward social mobility but continues to pursue whatever inadequate, dead-end conventional opportunities may be available to him. The "retreatist" is one who abandons both culturally induced success goals and institutionalized means and copes through escape into alcohol or drug abuse, vagrancy, and/or psychological withdrawal and deterioration. And finally there is the "rebel" who seeks emancipation from the reigning standards and attempts to introduce a new social order.

Aggregate level analyses generally presume these and related kinds of adjustments are being made in response to stressful macro-economic change, as reflected in increased rates of individual mental and physical illnesses and behavioral disorders and in indicators of the disintegration of social order such as rates of crime, divorce, and child and spouse abuse. We will briefly review some of these findings. It should be apparent, however, that such aggregate level associations cannot always convincingly account for whether it is the newly unemployed themselves who are exhibiting symptoms of distress or whether some other social group may



be primarily responsible (e.g., spouses of the unemployed, the chronically unemployed, or even the fully employed), or for that matter, whether the association is entirely spurious and is caused by some third variable involved with other contemporaneous socio-cultural, demographic, or institutional changes (such as fluctuations in mental hospital capacity or increased or selective outreach and case recording by social agencies.) Thus, in order to develop targeted ameliorative policy proposals, it will be necessary in subsequent sections to more directly assess impacts of unemployment using studies focusing on the unemployment experience itself.

The only aggregate level cross-sectional study located for review which addresses the relation of macroeconomic change to rates of individual well-being is a theoretical paper by Elliot Sclar (1978). Sclar contends that the trend toward growth of huge, highly mechanized corporate firms which serve national and international markets has deprived local communities of control over their productive resources and has much reduced the need for skilled labor. As a result, in communities where traditional locally-owned employment-related mechanisms for building support systems have been undermined, labor has been deskilled and made more dependent. An Example of the potential dangers to job security was illustrated previously in a review of Cottrell's (1951) case study describing the fatal dependency of a railroad town built to serve the interests of an industry spanning a national market. The need to remain competitive in this national market required

the introduction of a new technology (diesel-powered locomotives). This factor led to a decision by corporate headquarters to coldly eliminate the economic base of a town of its own creation, leaving the dependent and now obsolete work force to fend for itself. Taking the theoretical analysis of potential negative consequences a step further, Sclar hypothesizes that these kinds of structural changes in the organization of the labor market have led to dependency and feelings of helplessness among workers, creating a greater risk of individual dysfunction as a result of macro-economic change. The thesis remains to be tested with historical or comparative cross-sectional data but it has a certain plausibility.

Direct empirical tests of the association of macro-economic fluctuations and a variety of mental illnesses and behavioral disorders are exemplified in recent aggregate time-series analyses by Brenner (1973, 1975, 1977), Marshall and Funch (1979), Catalano and Dooley (1979), and Stocks and Buss (1981). Brenner's path-breaking study (Mental Illness and the Economy, 1973) continues to generate considerable interest and some controversy. Brenner took aggregate measures of employment levels and of industrial productivity, and examined how rates of first admissions to New York state and private mental hospitals varied with economic conditions over a 127 year period. When he controlled for long term and cyclic trends, he found that rates of first admissions to mental hospitals varied inversely with economic conditions, and particularly strongly when the dependent variable was lagged one to two years behind the economic measure. This finding was interpreted as evidence that economic downturns provoke pathological disorders leading to mental hospitalization. It was also found, however, that select demographic subgroups experienced exactly the converse relationship: people with less than grammar school education, women with high school educations, and the elderly showed a decreased likelihood of mental hospitalization during downturns of the economy. Brenner contends that these latter groups are unusual in that they gain relative to other social groups when the economy shrinks, and they experience relative deprivation during economic expansion.



A partial replication of Brenner's work by Marshall and Funch (1979) arrived at certain more precise specifications of the relation of mental illness to the economy. Brenner had contended that there was no need to be concerned with variations over time in mental hospital capacity since official admissions policies were apparently not associated with economic cycles. Taking note of the fact that actual administrative procedures may nonetheless have changed significantly, Marshall and Funch included an explicit measure of "hospital capacity" as well as an indicator of economic conditions in their time series analyses. Like Brenner, they find a strong negative relation between economic conditions and first admissions to mental hospitals for the working age population (35 to 65 years of age). But outside this age-specific subgroup and particularly for females under

age 15 or over 65, hospital capacity was a better predictor of levels of first admissions. This evidence suggests that economic stress is more salient as a cause of mental hospitalization for people of working age, whereas family intolerance may be more figural in the hospitalization of young and old dependents.

Catalano and Dooley (1979) echo the concerns of Marshall and Funch (1979) that Brenner failed to rule out hypotheses alternative to the individual stress model such as family or social intolerance, or lessened ability to care for disturbed persons. To test these and other hypotheses, they use a more powerful cross-lagged panel correlational research design, and multiple weekly cross sectional probability samples (N=1,140) from Kansas City, Missouri, collected between October 1971 and January 1973. Respondents were interviewed personally to obtain measures of life events and indicators of physiological and mental health. Also obtained were monthly case opening counts from a major publicly-funded mental health center. Measures of the monthly metropolitan unemployment rate were coupled with measures of absolute change in the size and structure of the metropolitan work force, to create an index of weighted (directional) absolute economic change. Their findings are very interesting: rates of mental health utilization among females and the young (aged 18 to 30) increase positively with measures of macro-economic well-being, while males, the middle-aged (31 to 51 years) and the elderly show decreased rates of mental health service utilization during good economic



times. On the surface, this would seem to indicate that economic crisis does indeed provoke stress-induced mental disorder affecting primarily the working age population and especially males. Additional analyses show that this may not, however, be the case. Catalano and Dooley found no evidence of cross correlations between symptoms and inpatient case openings which yielded significant lagged relationships for any demographic subgroup, as would have been expected under an illness-provocation hypothesis. Rather, when they controlled for same month symptoms, they found significant cross-correlations between inpatient case openings and economic change. Therefore, the data suggest that macro-economic change does not "provoke" mental disorder; rather, it uncovers pre-existing conditions of mental disorder. Thus, tolerance for existing disorders among males and the middle aged appears to decrease during economic downturns insofar as changed job market conditions may decrease the ability of marginal or unstable workers to hold a secure job. As a result professional help is sought to restore the main breadwinner to a competitive level of functioning as quickly as possible. By contrast, existing disorders among women and the young appear to be less likely to be uncovered during economic downturns. Catalano and Dooley offer the explanation that women's dual roles of domestic social support and supplemental income provision become ever more needed by the family during economic downturns; and similarly that the young also provide a needed source of social support, consolation and and supplementary income during such times.

These explanations seem less than completely convincing. It appears equally plausible that women and the young stand at the back of the "queue" for persons granted assistance at public mental health centers, particularly in periods of high demand for services such as during economic downturns. This latter interpretation is more consistent with the findings of Marshall and Funch (1979) that hospital capacity is a better predictor than economic change of levels of first admissions to mental hospitals for young and old dependents, whereas economic stress is more salient as a cause of mental hopitalization for people of working age. In any event, the inconclusiveness of these data underscore the call by Jim House (1979) for research looking at institutional variables such as union formation and activity, community integration, and government health and labor policies to complement data on individual response to economic change.

A recent aggregate time series analysis includes a variety of institutional contexts in framing interpretations of the covariation of rates of economic and social disorders with economic cycles. Stocks and Buss (1981) used a variety of techniques to discern aggregate level impacts on the Youngstown, Ohio community resulting from the partial closing of the Campbell Works of Youngstown Sheet and Tube in September 1977. From the start they alert the reader to the fact that despite the loss of 3,900 jobs as a result of the plant closing, mean levels of manufacturing employment twelve months before and after the closing were identical, resulting from a gain of



more than 4,700 jobs since the closing of the steel mill in sectors of the economy including local transportation equipment and durable metals manufacturing. These rapid employment gains coupled with provision of unemployment insurance, trade adjustment assistance and other income supports to the unemployed served to dramatically minimize potential negative impacts of the plant closing on the well-being of the local economy and the populace. Stocks and Buss note that their findings stand in stark contrast to catastrophic predictions by other hastily prepared impact studies, which implicitly assumed status quo conditions in other local employment sectors and which failed to consider ameliorative effects of income support programs.

In their time series analysis Stocks and Buss (1981) compared two extended deseasonalized regression lines for Mahoning County (containing Youngstown). The first regression equation is computed from data collected a year or more prior to closing and data collected around the time of closing; the second regression equation from data collected at the time of closing and actual figures a year or more after closing. Trends were compared as they emerged in the following indicators before and after the plant shutdown: mortality rates, per capita liquor sales, monthly new car sales, real estate transfers, bankruptcies filed, marriage licenses granted, court cases, and divorce petitions granted. The only clear and significant differences found in projected and actual trends were increases in domestic relations court cases, which showed an alarming and steep rise two years after the closing, and a

downward trend in marriage license applications filed.

Interpretation of these aggregate level findings of marital disorganization and low rates of marital social formation is necessarily speculative. Nonetheless, in the following section we will review consistent evidence from case studies and surveys of the unemployed showing that job loss has disintegrating effects on marital relationships predisposed to instability. Further, we may speculate that because young workers with low seniority were disproportionately displaced in the closing and were disproportionately subject to long term unemployment (see Buss and Hofstetter, 1981), it is no surprise that the instability of their work careers apparently hindered creation of marital unions.

Certain other indicators also showed expected negative trends: bankruptcies, real estate transfers, and new car sales. But Stocks and Buss wisely caution that these findings are inconclusive in view of contemporaneous changes in institutional variables, including liberalization of bankruptcy filing statutes, rising interest rates, and declining consumer buying power. Beyond what has already been noted, they further contend that impacts of the closing on the local economy were minimized because of a relatively diversified economic structure which readily adapted to changing market conditions by seeking out new customers and more aggressively pursuing old customers. Finally, negative social impacts, which will be seen in later sections of the paper to be dependent not only on objective conditions but subjective perception of those conditions, were minimized due to a climate of optimism re-



garding the likelihood of economic revitalization and shortages of labor fostered by the media and community leaders. Sensitivity to these kinds of contextual variables is not often seen in the time series literature, perhaps because many studies employ data from areas so large that attention to localized environmental variables is made infeasible. In focusing on a single community, and a single plant closing, Stocks and Buss were able to account for important contextual factors.

Conclusion

In this section we have briefly reviewed evidence of fairly consistent aggregate level associations between macro-economic cycles and rates of behavioral and social disorder. We noted that this research tradition assumes an underlying model of anomic social conditions which require behavioral adjustments and adaptations by affected individuals and social collectivities. But we have also commented on the inherent limitations of aggregate level data in specifying the etiologic processes linking macro-economic change with individual behavioral disorder. Even so, in a particularly sensitive analysis Catalano and Dooley were able to discern evidence that unemployment tends to uncover existing problematic behavior instead of provoking it as many commentators have claimed. This evidence has profound implications for the weighing of potential costs and benefits of alternative policy and program interventions. Catalano and Dooley frame the issue thusly:

"If economic change provokes disorder, the

> human costs should be taken into account, along with the cost of serving those victims who request help, and deducted from the anticipated benefits of any policy that encourages change. If economic change uncovers existing disorder, only the costs of servicing new demands should be accounted and deducted. There may, of course, be a sub-symptom distress provoked by economic change that should be counted as a cost. The challenge is to measure those beyond the anecdotal level." (Catalano and Dooley, 1979, p. 340.)

In conclusion, then, these etiologic issues have potent consequences for the policy debate. In contradistinction to Catalano and Dooley, one might argue that even if the cumulative evidence upholds their "uncovering" hypothesis, policy makers weighing costs and benefits of economic policies still might want to consider the potential loss to the labor force and to overall levels of productivity of displaced, disturbed and marginally productive workers and their labor. There are, of course, yet other issues of social justice to be considered beyond the social and economic costs incurred by policies which result in worker displacement. The former issue of cost/benefit analysis is a topic we must leave to the economists who have the requisite expertise in these matters. The latter is essentially a question of prioritizing values which must be resolved through the political process. We are left, then, with the important task of weighing evidence from studies of the unemployed themselves to discern etiologic processes relevant to policy formation.

## III Unemployment as a Stressor: Elaborating the Etiologic Linkages

Literature identifying and defining unemployment as a source of stress is examined in this section. Evidence



is reviewed showing that the stress of unemployment is mediated by social psychological, economic, and social organizational factors, including: shared sociocultural meanings of working and being out of work; perceived and objective downward status mobility; financial inadequacy and insecurity; and presence of various forms of social support. The studies reviewed show that these objective and subjective factors vary for incumbents of different ascribed and achieved statuses, such as gender, marital status, age, and education and occupational level.

Certain terms typically found in the literature on stressful life events and illnesses and behavioral disorders will inform the analysis of the individual impacts of job loss. Alan McLean, editor of a series of monographs on stress, defines essential terminology as follows:

> "...Stress defines a process or a system which includes not only the stressful event and the reaction to it, but all the intervening steps between. The stressor is a stressful event or stressful condition that produces a psychological or physical reaction in the individual that is usually unpleasant and sometimes produces symptoms of emotional or physiological disability. The stress reaction concerns the consequences of the stimulus provided by a stressor. It is, in other words, the response to a stressor, and it is generally unhealthy. Most often, such reactions may be defined in rather traditional psychological terms, ranging from mild situational anxiety and depression to serious emotional disability." (in Shostak, 1980, p. vii.)

Additional definitions useful to the analysis are given by Rabkin and Struening (1976, p. 1014): Mediating factors are "...those characteristics of the stressful event, of the individual, and of his social support system that in-

fluence his perception of or sensitivity to stressors." And finally, predisposing factors are defined as "...longstanding behavior patterns, childhood experiences, and durable personal and social characteristics that may alter the susceptibility of the individual to illness."

A. Unemployment as a Social Stressor

The first question to be addressed is whether unemployment can be considered a social stressor. Much of the literature on job loss presumes so. James House asserts, for example: "Work is no longer seen as a means to mere survival but rather as an almost irreplaceable element in establishing a person's sense of self and personal worth." (House, 1974, p. 145.) This contention finds support in empirical studies assessing the strength of desire to work. Morse and Weiss (1955) found that 80 percent of respondents surveyed reported they would continue to work even if they could live comfortably without working. A more contemporary analysis of National Longitudinal Survey data by Parnes and King (1977) asked the same question (in 1966) and found that even among middle aged men displaced from their jobs, as many as 67 percent would continue working even if they did not have to, in comparison to 72 percent of a matched continously-employed control group.

It is important to note, however, that the desire to work may co-exist with feelings of alienation from one's particular job. David Riesman comments in his preface to



Eli Chinoy's case study of production workers in a Michigan factory (Automobile Workers and the American Dream): "...Chinoy's interviews show work to be regarded as a form of daily part-time imprisonment, through which one pays off the fines incurred by one's pursuit of the good, or rather the 'good time' life at home and on vacations." (Chinoy, 1955, p. xix.) Alienation is the reason eighty percent of the blue-collar operatives Chinoy interviewed expressed a desire to leave the factory. Many of these men dreamt of finding independence and autonomy in occupations such as small business or farming, but very few were successful in making these dreams a reality.

Auto workers have developed a set of ambitions and goals circumscribed by the reward structure of the workplace. Extremely limited opportunities for advancement from the shop floor lead to gradual abandonment of hopes for conventional occupational "success," giving way to a high premium on steady work and maximization of income. Chinoy comments:

> "Aspirations of factory workers are limited by the objectively limited possibilities for advancement. Even so they don't blame their failure to rise on forces beyond their control. Instead they maintain self-esteem by...redefining advancement to include the goals and interests with which they are actively concerned, by projecting their hopes and aspirations upon their children, and, to a lesser extent, by minimizing success and emphasizing alternative values...They extend the meaning of ambition and advancement to include the search for security, the pursuit of small gains in the factory, and the constant accumulation of personal possessions." (Chinoy, 1955, p. 124.)

In short then, despite severe alienation from their jobs, autoworkers express even greater fear of layoff. Their work does not seem to have much intrinsic meaning for them;

rather it is valued primarily for its extrinsic rewards, i.e., as a means to "getting ahead," which is framed in terms of economic security and a visibly comfortable standard of living.

Marie Jahoda (1979) comments in a very interesting article that workers who experience alienation with regard to disagreeable conditions of the organization and reward structure of work may nonetheless find work psychologically supportive, because work fulfills certain latent psychological functions:

> "First among them is the fact that employment imposes a time structure on the waking day.
> Secondly, employment implies regularly shared experiences and contacts with people outside the nuclear family.
> Thirdly, employment links an individual to goals and purposes which transcend his own.
> Fourthly, unemployment defines aspects of personal status and identity.
> Finally, employment enforces activity." (Jahoda, 1979, p. 313.)

Beyond the loss of manifest functions such as economic adequacy and security, it's the loss of these latent functions that helps make unemployment psychologically destructive to even the most alienated industrial worker. It might be added that the need to satisfy these functions may account in part for survey evidence reviewed earlier showing that the vast majority of workers would work even if they didn't have to in order to live comfortably.

For all of the reasons described it seems unquestionable that job loss qualifies as a potentially stressful life event. But life events objectively defined as stressful do not necessarily have equivalent impacts on individuals: to begin with, etiological theories of stress-induced illness and behavioral



disorder posit that individuals will vary in the degree to which they perceive the social stressor as indeed stressful. In large part it's the subjective experience of stress which bears potentially negative consequences for individual psychological and physical well-being.

B. Stress-Mediating Factors

A sophisticated social psychological study of the effects of employment status change on self attitudes by Richard Cohn (1977, 1978) is quite informative with regard to the circumstances under which unemployment is perceived and experienced as stressful. Cohn presents and tests several fundamental postulates derived from social psychological theories. (See Figure 1, copied from Cohn 1978, p. 82.) First is that the relative importance of employment status to the individual will vary with his subgroup's expectations regarding members' employment status, which are presumably reflected in the individual's value system. The relative importance of employment status depends similarly on the presence of alternative components of self-concept.

Cohn's second postulate is that individuals will vary in how they evaluate changes in their self-concept depending on what they perceive as the cause of their unemployment. Thus, change in employment status is hypothesized to have both direct impacts on the employment status component of self-concept, and, indirect effects through impacts on social role performance - and these may in turn affect still other evaluations of components of self-concept.

Figure 1*

Theoretical model of the effect of employment status change on self-attitudes. (Dotted lines indicate unmeasured constructs; $C_{es}$ indicates the employment status component of self-concept.)




*Figure copied from Richard Cohn, "The Effect of Employment Status Change on Self-Attitudes," Social Psychology, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 81-93.



Third, to the extent that environmental indicators provide information that unemployment is due to external factors, then most of the impact of unemployment on self-concept will be indirect rather than direct, i.e., through impaired role performance.

Cohn's theoretical framework helps to organize at least some of the diverse literature treating the impact of unemployment on the well-being of the worker, in particular, that part dealing with psychosocial stress processes. And his own empirical work is informative as well. Cohn's analysis employs a logistic probability model for use with a discrete dependent variable (satisfaction with self), and a nonequivalent control group design, to compare respondents from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics who have experienced unemployment with those who have not. (Cohn, 1978.) Acknowledging that unemployment is not a random event, Cohn controls for self-attitudinal differences other than those associated with employment status change. Still, it should be noted that it is possible, despite careful attempts to adjust for initial differences, for non-randomly selected groups to vary systematically on uncontrolled and unmeasured variables. Yet another potential weakness of the research design is the single measure of self-satisfaction, "Are you more often satisfied or dissatisfied with yourself?" It is well known that survey respondents tend to verbalize a positive self-image in response to such questions, yielding a negatively-skewed distribution of responses. As a result, the true nature of the extent of differences be-

tween groups on this measure will tend to be under-estimated.

Thus it is very suggestive that Cohn finds a significant relationship between employment status and self-satisfaction ($p<.001$), after adjusting for prior level of self-satisfaction. Moreover, the effect of employment status change on self-satisfaction was not conditional on prior level of self-esteem. These findings serve as evidence going "beyond the anecdotal level" that job loss does in fact provoke distress; it does not solely "uncover" disorder as Catalano and Dooley (1979) have suggested. It should be acknowledged, however, that dissatisfaction with self may be symptomatic of psychological distress of a lesser magnitude (i.e., "sub-symptom distress") than the illness-risk factors Catalano and Dooley were concerned with. Still, it offers some evidence that unemployment does "hurt" psychologically.

Other studies reveal "sub-symptom" psychological stress reactions provoked by unemployment. Schlozman and Verba (1979), who studied a national random sample of the metropolitan workforce, with an over-sampling of the unemployed, comment: "A number of respondents reported an increase since the onset of unemployment in symptoms that are often associated with nervous tension - difficulty sleeping, frequent headaches, increased drinking or smoking, irritability." (p. 63) Other evidence of "sub-symptom" distress is given in the Parnes and King (1977) analysis of National Longitudinal Survey data, in which it was found that many of the displaced middle aged men studied suffered an increased sense of powerlessness



and loss of initiative subsequent to job loss, as measured by scores on the Rotter Internal/External Control scale.

Marital status as a mediating factor

Of course, not all unemployed people react to the stress of job loss in the same way. A variety of factors predispose individuals to react in different ways, while the same or other factors may also mediate the relation between stressors and stress reactions. One variable that plays this dual role is marital status. The presence of a spouse and children can predispose one to stress because of felt responsibilities to fulfill the role of economic provider, and this sense of role failure can also be aggravated by pre-unemployment marital relations which are tense and unsatisfactory. On the other hand, families characterized by mutual support, warmth and flexibility in the face of role changes may give the jobless person social support which alleviates stress.

Komarovsky's (1938) case studies of the families of married, skilled blue-collar men who lost their jobs during the Depression are particularly informative with regard to the impact of unemployment on the quality of family relations. Pre-unemployment relations within the family proved critical in determining whether the family became disorganized as a result of the role failure of the man:

> "When the ground of the husband's authority was primary (i.e., based on love, admiration, respect, or traditional acceptance), the family showed a remarkable stability in the face of unemployment. It appears, thus, that unemployment does not so much change the sentiments of the wife towards the husband, as it makes

explicit the unsatisfactory sentiments that already existed prior to the depression." (Komarovsky, 1938, p. 54. Author's italics.)

In 13 of 59 families studied, husbands suffered a loss of status in the eyes of their wives and children. These men reacted to this stress in any of a variety of ways, including: physical and emotional abuse of the spouse and children; displays of hyper-sensitivity and irritability; stubborn refusal to change roles (i.e., to help with the housework and child rearing); seeking of compensations outside for humiliation at home (e.g., engaging in extra-marital affairs, frequenting saloons in search of drunken escape and companionship); or complete capitulation in defense against accusations and blame.

Cohn (1978) was unable to test for these kinds of behavioral stress reactions, but he did examine indirect effects on self-satisfaction through changes in role performance for married males. Changes in role performance were embodied in measures of the husband's relative economic contribution to the family, and the amount of time the husband spent doing housework. The former measure implies that the wife has assumed the role of the main provider. The latter measure seems to reflect psychological repercussions of the dimension of "capitulation" as a coping response. Cohn found that among employed husbands, change in role performance was not significantly related to change in self-attitude. Cohn's interpretation of this is rather shallow; he says merely that the change in the husband's role performance may result from the wife going to work. Taking his suggestion to a more



meaningful conclusion, one might speculate that no change in self-attitude reflects the employed husband's membership in a marital union characterized by a "balance of power" and by mutual respect. The domineering patriarchal jusband, by contrast, would probably not allow his wife to go to work under normal conditions, but he may be forced to capitulate in the face of his own unemployment. Thus, when Cohn looked at unemployed husbands, changes in role performance were significantly related to lowered self-concept, as might be expected.

Gender as a mediating factor

Cohn next tests a hypothesis that the impact of unemployment will vary with the centrality of employment status to the individual's value system. Differential sex role socialization suggests that women are not necessarily expected to work; they have an alternative role of motherhood available to them. Indeed, when Cohn tested the impact of unemployment on married women with children, they were signigicantly less likely than married men with children to experience dissatisfaction with themselves as a result of unemployment. By contrast, when he compared the impact of unemployment on self-satisfaction for male and female heads-of-households, there was no significant difference. Thus, mere sex role socialization alone does not mediate the impact of unemployment; there must also be a satisfactory alternative role realistically available to women.

Two additional studies compare impacts of unemployment on men and women, but unfortunately neither control for marital status, and neither has data comparable to Cohn's on "self-

satisfaction." Warren (1980) reports summary results from a large random sample survey of households in suburban Detroit communities. She finds that while women in general report twice the number of stress symptoms as men, unemployed women report almost four times as much stress symptomatology as do unemployed men. These data are reported in gross summary form and it is not possible to disaggregate them by socioeconomic or occupational status, which may be indicated since the study over-sampled blue-collar households. Warren finds that blue collar women, in contrast to men and to white-collar women, have less access to and lower rates of utilization of systems of informal social support and of professional help as well, which accounts in part for the startlingly high stress levels she reports for unemployed women.

Landau et al (1980) report comparative data on depression for laid-off male and female blue-collar auto workers completing a self-administered questionnaire at a MESC office located within a United Autoworkers Union hall near Ypsilanti, Michigan. The reliability and validity of the findings are marred by a fifty percent refusal rate, but at least there were no proportional differences by race or sex between those who were or were not interviewed. Measures of depression were taken with the Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale. The findings, once again, are not disaggregated by marital status, but it is reported that some eighty percent of the sample were young and married. Forty percent of respondents scored above 56 on the Zung Index - the mean score for a sample of male psychiatric outpatients diagnosed depressed or anxious - in comparison to



13 percent of respondents in a normal population (mean score of 37). The mean depression score for unemployed women was five points higher on the index than that for men (54.5 versus 49.4). These findings and those reported earlier by Warren reveal that the near total neglect in the research literature of the impacts of unemployment on women is quite unwarranted. The need for more attention to the problems of unemployed women is further underscored by evidence reviewed earlier showing that rates of unemployment for women - and especially single parent women - are particularly sensitive to fluctuations in the economic cycle.

Social Class as a mediating factor

Occupational status is a factor of singular importance in mediating the impacts of job loss. Braginsky and Braginsky (1975) assert a relatively untested colloquialism: "The higher one's status and the more sudden one's fall, the greater the impact." Evidence from the Powell and Driscoll (1973) case study of unemployed professional and technical men would seem to support claims of high levels of distress in this group. By contrast, evidence from the Cohn (1978) survey would contest this contention. He hypothesized that for white-collar workers, the salience of alternative components of self-concept such as occupational status and educational attainment would be greater than that of employment status. Indeed, he finds no difference in self-satisfaction between employed and unemployed white-collar workers. When he controls for educational status, only white-collar workers with

a high school education or less show a significant decrement in self-satisfaction as a result of employment status change. This latter finding remains inconclusive however, for he was unable to disaggregate the analysis by upper versus lower level white-collar status. Thus, it could well be that education is but a proxy for further distinctions in occupational level; and it may be that lower white-collar workers experience unemployment in much the same way as do blue-collar workers. In Cohn's study, blue-collar workers do suffer a signigicant decrement in self-satisfaction with employment status change, and level of educational attainment makes no difference.

Explanation for Cohn's finding is suggested in the interpretation given by Schlozman and Verba (1977) with regard to their own finding of greater psychological strain among lower occupational status unemployed people. They comment:

> "The unemployed professional retains a sense of his professional identity... The unemployed assembly line worker or the jobless typist is less likely to have derived a sense of self-esteem from his profession in the first place: rather he is more likely to have gained a sense of self worth from his ability to hold a steady job and to act as a responsible breadwinner. Under these circumstances unemployment would seem to be particularly threatening: deprived of being a good provider, the unemployed nonprofessional has no other identity to fall back on." (Schlozman and Verba, 1979, p. 65.)

An exhaustive review of studies on unemployed men during the Depression reveals the stability of the observed general relationship between occupational status and unemployment stress reaction across time:

> "...(G)eneral maladjustment is greatest among men from the lower occupational strata and among men with the least education. They are characterized too by poorer morale, discouragement and a sense of hopelessness. This may indicate that the more adversity the individual suffers previous to unemployment, the more he suffers during unemployment, and as a corollary, continued adversity saps the morale, rather than builds it up, so that those who suffer most can take suffering the least." (Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, 1938, p. 374.)



But the authors insert an important qualifier, acknowledging the contextual relevance of differential evaluations of employment status within specific socio-cultural groups. In support of this thesis, ethnographic studies of the black ghetto (e.g., Liebow, 1967; Hannerz, 1969) reveal that in these communities characterized by low social mobility, chronic unemployment, and employment instability, no great stigma attaches to the unemployed individual. In the same vein, Cavan (1959) found that the "lower lower class," comprised of families chronically unemployed and on relief continually - even in prosperous times, adjusted relatively readily to the Depression. Not only did they experience a relative <u>increase</u> in status as others moved down, but they also benefitted from greater experience and familiarity with techniques for utilizing and manipulating social agencies. (Bakke, 1940, p. 254.) Despite the fact that these chronically poor people display a variety of stress reactions even during good economic times such as alcoholism, emotional instability, and stress-induced illness, they tend to take unemployment as a normal way of life, and as a result they were least adversely affected by the Depression; their high normative levels of stress reactions remained essentially the same.

Hence, evidence of <u>increased</u> strain or psychological

stress reaction as a result of job loss appears to be most prominent among middle socioeconomic class blue-collar workers and lower middle class blue and white collar workers. But even here there are important qualifications to be made, and these are concerned with the level of skill of the worker, the extent of economic deprivation experienced, and the presence of social support.

There are some authors who contend that more highly skilled blue collar workers may be more subject to increased stress as a result of job loss. LeMasters' Blue Collar Aristocrats (1975), an ethnographic study of construction and crafts workers conducted over a five year period in a tavern, revealed the almost total absence of feelings of alienation about their jobs, in contrast to high levels of alienation commonly reported among factory production operatives. These men enjoyed working in jobs characterized by high levels of autonomy and independence, and when laid-off they missed work terribly. As LeMasters says,

> "In the period of observation being reported on, I never heard a single man say that he hated his work - or even disliked it. Complaints were heard about particular foremen, or the weather on outside construction jobs, but as a group the men seemed to enjoy their work. They joked about incidents on the job, they drank beer after work with members of the crew - and they earned good wages." (LeMasters, 1975, p. 20.)

Hence, it is ~~more~~ likely that skilled blue-collar workers value work for its intrinsic satisfactions to a greater degree than alienated semi-skilled and unskilled factory production workers, who appear to place greater emphasis



on extrinsic motivations rooted in a re-definition of occupational success which dwells on security and the accumulation of material possessions. Thus, it is the lost sense of security and capacity to augment status through material acquisitions that appears particularly problematic for the laid-off factory operative. This is not to say that lower occupational status blue - and white-collar workers do not also suffer from loss of certain other "latent functions" of work (Jahoda, 1980), especially those resulting from removal from a structured setting which enforces activity, organizes the passage of time, and provides for regular social interaction outside the family.

Stress reinforcers: economic deprivation, and duration of unemployment

Reinforcing the interpretation given above are the findings of a seminal study by Kasl and Cobb (1979) on the impacts of job loss on the mental and physical health of blue-collar factory operatives who were permanently displaced as a result of plant closings. Kasl and Cobb found that, in general, "... the mental health of job loss and unemployment appears to be a limited one, both in terms of its magnitude as well as in terms of its duration." (Kasl and Cobb, 1979, p. 293.) But a variety of circumstances surrounding the impacts of this instance of mass layoff importantly restrict the generalizability of the results. Thus, Kasl and Cobb caution: "(T)here is no question in our mind that the results

obtained could have been different had we studied some group of men other than low skilled blue collar workers. Stated differently, it is likely that our results are generalizable only to other groups who have a weak attachment to the work role and whose work is not a particularly meaningful activity." (Ibid.) Furthermore, the closings came during a time of relative economic prosperity which allowed for the rapid re-employment of most of these workers, who also received severance pay and unemployment benefits that minimized feelings of economic insecurity and deprivation. Loss of opportunity for social interaction and support may have been minimized due to the fact that an entire plant was shut down, so that the full cohort of workers went through the experience together and thereby enhanced the possibilities for the building of community support structures. It must be noted, however, that in times of macro-economic crisis such as the present, in contrast to the period of study spanned by the Kasl and Cobb research, the entire community may be economically distressed and thereby impaired in its capacity to respond with adequate support. (Liem and Liem, 1979, p. 363.)

Supporting Kasl and Cobb's caution that rapid re-employment may have minimized the stresses resulting from the plant closings, Jim House (1981) concluded from a re-examination of their data that: "The important stressor in this study turned out not to be loss of a job, per se, but how long the worker was unemployed.... On almost all measures of interest in this study, the greater the length of unemployment,



the greater the level of perceived stress and poor health experienced." (House, 1981, p. 64.)

The importance of additional mediating factors in the relationship between unemployment, occupational status, and stress reactions is further illustrated in findings from two studies of displaced professional men. In a study of laid-off aerospace engineers, Craig Little (1976) found that the only mediating factor which predicted dissatisfaction with the consequences of job loss at the .05 level was "economic deprivation," or severe decrements in standard of living. Little notes that the respondents often had sizeable savings to draw upon, as well as substantial earnings by their generally well-educated and readily-employable wives.

A study of unemployed scientists and engineers by Powell and Driscoll (1973) characterizes the reaction of men during the month initially following lay-off as one of "relaxation and relief." Significant evidence of stress and strain did not appear until several months of fruitless job search led many men to doubt the value of their prior occupational and educational achievements ("alternative components of self-concept," as Cohn (1978) conceptualizes them). Thus, even among unemployed higher level white-collar workers, it seems that stress and strain may arise under circumstances of substantial economic deprivation and the undermining of alternative components of self-concept that appears to result from prolonged and unsuccessful job search. Notably, economic deprivation tends to be a positive function of the duration of unemployment. (Kasl and Cobb, 1979, p. 286.)

Landau et al (1980) present provocative insights into the impacts of economic deprivation on well-being among workers receiving unemployment compensation. Unexpectedly, they found that objective measures of relative economic deprivation were not associated with depressive symptomatology among laid-off automobile workers. However, perceived financial hardship was associated with high scores on the Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale. Evidence from another study which also sampled respondents reporting at a MESC office further specifies how perceived economic deprivation interacts with receipt of unemployment benefits. Figueira-McDonough (1978) found that length of unemployment has a curvilinear effect on financial worry: levels of worry are greatest among respondents unemployed less than five months or more than ten months. This suggests that financial worry is generated by the initial shock of unemployment but diminishes over time, only to be renewed in anticipation of the eventual termination of benefits.

Other adverse consequences of job loss when coupled with economic deprivation are summarized by Mick (1975) in his review of the literature on the social costs of plant shutdowns:

> "Economic deprivation was found to be strongly associated with dissatisfaction with life, reduced social interaction, political alienation, economic radicalism, and destruction of integrated, closely knit patterns of life inside and outside the plant." (Mick, 1975, p. 205.)

Economic deprivation is a potent reinforcer of the stress



of job loss and its impacts.

Drawing together the diverse findings of the studies reviewed, it appears that under conditions of perceived economic hardship and prolonged unemployment, white-collar workers come to resemble blue collar workers in their negative reactions to the stress of unemployment.

Attribution of blame as a mediating factor

Yet another factor which mediates the impact of job loss is attribution of blame. Cohn (1978) tests an hypothesis derived from attribution theory which predicts that the individual's self-concept is less likely to be negatively evaluated to the extent that the cause of unemployment can be attributed to external factors (e.g., to periods and regions characterized by high rates of unemployment). As expected, dissatisfaction with self was found to be significantly higher amonf respondents living in areas with low unemployment rates.

Caplan (1979) provides further insights into how external attribution of blame may serve as a positive coping response. Numerous studies have shown that as the duration of unemployment becomes prolonged over many months, the unemployed person tends to become apathetic and listless; overcome by feelings of powerlessness, fatalism, and pessimism, he no longer learches vigorously for work. (See, for example, Powell and Driscoll, 1973; Zawadski and Lazarsfeld,

1935.) Caplan describes this as a state of "learned helplessness," "... in which a person, through repeated unsuccessful attempts (such as seeking employment on many occasions without success), has come to accept the belief that choice and control are no longer possible." (Caplan, 1979, p. 103.) Learned helplessness is a negative coping response that could conceivably be overcome through counseling, for the research literature "...suggests that the learned helplessness response might be erased if people could learn to attribute past failures to the nature of the environment and not to their own incapacity to handle them." (Ibid.)

The literature suggests that the spouse should be involved in this counseling as well. Komarovsky (1940) and Zawadski and Lazarsfeld (1935) report that extreme bitterness and divisiveness is created when wives accuse their jobless husbands of indolence. Komarovsky reports that the tendency for the wife to blame her jobless husband was greatest for those men whose pre-unemployment authority within the family was based on economic or physical coercion rather than love and respect. Also suggesting a need for marital counseling in some cases is a finding from Gore's (1978) analysis of the Cobb and Kasl data, to the effect that men who felt unsupported by their wives and friends were much more likely to blame themselves for their unemployment.

Still, internal attribution of blame does not appear



to exist to the same extent that it did during the Depression. Schlozman and Verba (1979) report findings from their national survey:

> "... The unemployed did not blame themselves for their joblessness. We found little of the personal guilt about joblessness said to be characteristic of the 1930's. The unemployed, however, did not deny personal responsibility; most individuals took it upon themselves to cope with unemployment by finding new jobs and making efforts to manage better financially. ... Our respondents do not seem to have lost their belief in the individual's responsibility to take care of himself, but they couple it with an equally insistent belief that the government has a responsibility also." (Schlozman and Verba, 1919, p. 348.)

Thus, it appears that the ideology of the "American Dream" which focuses responsibility on the individual for his success or lack thereof has come to be tempered by belief in entitlement to supportive government benefits and services in times of personal economic difficulty. Also significant is the finding that today's unemployed experience their joblessness as a personal problem and not as a collective one. Schlozman and Verba note (1979, p. 349): "It is associated with real personal unhappiness and with preferences for certain policies designed to ameliorate the situation, but not with general disenchantment with American life, wholesale changes in social ideology, or adoption of radical policy positions." In conclusion, then, counseling which attempts to promote externalization of blame through condemnation of the "capitalist system" is likely to fall on deaf ears. External attribution of blame is more usefully

directed toward specific features of the economic environment such as the rate of unemployment.

Age and persistent hardship

Age appears to interact curvilinearly with perceived hardship and its impacts as a result of unemployment. Younger men (in their thirties and forties) are more likely to be burdened with the responsibility to provide for dependent children, but are also more quickly re-employed than are displaced men in late middle age. Moreover, older middle aged men are more subject to the added stresses of re-unemployment and downward social mobility.

Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938) conclude from their review of Depression-era studies that unemployed men in their thirties with dependent children were most discouraged and had the worst morale of any age group. It is important to note that during the Depression young as well as older men suffered very long term unemployment, sometimes lasting for years. Nonetheless, it appears that today in economically distressed communities such as Youngstown, Ohio, blue-collar men in their thirties are less able than somewhat older men to compete for job opportunities on the basis of work experience, and as a result face a greater probability of long term unemployment. (Buss and Hofstetter, 1981.) In tight labor market conditions (i.e., when job opportunities are plentiful), men in their thirties and forties seem to



react more strongly in terms of reported illness symptomatology to the initial impact of job loss, but they also recover more quickly and more totally than do older workers. (Kasl, Gore, and Cobb, 1975, p. 112.)

There is strong evidence that the probability of re-unemployment and of downward social mobility increases with age, particularly for men displaced in late middle age. Sheppard (1965) followed men displaced as a result of the collapse of the Packard Motor Company, and found that, among whites, one-third of workers under fifty years of age suffered re-unemployment, moving up to two-fifths of workers aged fifty to fifty-nine, and one-half of workers over age sixty. In this study a greater proportion (59 percent) of men who were re-unemployed suffered high levels of anomia (a measure of sense of normlessness related to apathy and depression) than the proportion (40 percent) of workers who never found a new job during the two years spanned by the study. Drawing upon insights from Durkheim's theory of anomie, Ferman and Gardner interpret this result as indicating that repeated status changes "... generate a milieu of uncertainty about the worth of existing group ties and values." Ferman and Gardner, 1979, p. 216.)

Permanent displacement for the older middle aged blue collar worker often signals the beginning of a series of undesirable labor market experiences. Shostak (1980) comments:

> "Many ... know that working for a new employer, while welcomed for its affirmation of one's adulthood and value to others, means starting at the bottom again: Reemployed blue collar males over forty-five, for example, will never qualify for the longer vacation period they had slowly worked up to in a previous job; this is no small loss for a household head who goes back to a rank beginner's two-week vacation schedule (and comparable cutbacks in retirement and insurance benefits)." (Shostak, 1980, p. 29.)

Middle aged men working at a new job face the same prospects of limited or indefinite layoff as do younger workers with equivalent years of seniority. Thus, in Parnes and King's (1977) study of displaced middle-aged men, it was found that re-employed men had worked substantially fewer hours per week during the previous year than a matched control group that had never been displaced. (The measure was taken several years after the initial displacement experience.) Worse yet, fully three-fifths of displaced workers subsequently suffered downward occupational mobility, compared with only one-fifth of controls during the period of study, 1966 to 1973.

A fascinating longitudinal archival study of the impacts of worklife instability among fathers in the Great Depression by Elder and Rockwell (1979) reveals that the hardship incurred during the Depression persisted even through the prosperous war years and created further hardships for their sons who came of college age in the late 1940's:



> "Fathers who suffered a heavy income loss (classified as deprived) experienced a more unstable work life into the war years than the nondeprived, as indicated by multiple jobs and employers, one or more shifts in line of work, less time in a consistent line of work, a fluctuation in occupational status (e.g., movement down, up, down), and status loss between 1929 and World War II. These aspects of the family career are highly interrelated (average r= .46) and formed a satisfactory index of persistent hardship through a principle factor analysis ...."
>
> According to this measure, persistent hardship represents a substantial link between family deprivation during the early 1930s (r= .56) and lack of completion of college in the postwar years (r= -.32). The disadvantage of persistent hardship is most pronounced among sons from the middle class, where institutionalized career paths are particularly disrupted by a disorderly work life." (Elder and Rockwell, 1979, pp. 265-266.)

Because there occurred an enormous growth in professional and technical jobs during the post-war era, creating tight labor market conditions, many sons of deprived families who failed to enter or finish college still managed to succeed in their work lives. But when these sons were studied in their forties (during the 1960's), it was found that past hardship revealed itself in a high incidence of psychological problems. Elder and Rockwell comment:

> "Though health problems are more often acknowledged by the least successful men, and especially those from deprived homes, energy decline, heavy drinking, and the use of therapy are most prevalent in the lives of men who moved upward from Depression hardship to work life achievement. Such hardship did not hamper work life accomplishments among the college entrants but its psychic toll continues to blight a sense of well-being." (Elder and Rockwell, pp. 292-293.)

In conclusion, then, latter day advocates of policies of benign neglect toward the unemployed during these troubled economic times would do well to consider the potential long term consequences not only for the jobless workers themselves but also their offspring. Extrapolating from Depression-era findings, particular concern ought to be directed toward ameliorating the consequences of unemployment for young heads of household with young dependent children.



C. Coping Responses and Phases of Adaptation and Adjustment

Unemployed persons are seen to employ a fairly delimited set of means to cope with the consequences of job loss. These cognitive, affective and behavioral coping responses can be regarded as either positive - insofar as they mollify or eliminate the stress of unemployment and improve the individual's chances for re-employment, or as negative insofar as they aggravate the stress of job loss, create new stresses, or otherwise impair the individual's chances for re-employment.

The type of coping response employed tends to follow a fairly predictable pattern of changes revealed in a convergence within phases of adjustment or adaptation over the course of the unemployment experience. The precise nature of the type of coping response utilized at any given time depends on personal predispositions, mediating environmental factors such as: the overall rate of unemployment as it affects probabilities and expectations for re-employment; access to social networks providing emotional support; access to formal and informal instrumental support services such as unemployment benefits, severance pay and welfare; and gifts and loans of goods and services by kin and friends; as well as measures affecting concrete job options including job retraining programs, relocation assistance programs, and collective bargaining agreements providing for rights to "bumping" and early retirement, and so on. The analysis of coping responses can usefully be organized around the typical progression of phases of adjustment in order to emphasize implications for develop-

ment and appropriate timing of ameliorative interventions.

The process of psychological adjustment to long term unemployment is very succinctly summarized in a statement by Jahoda (1979, p. 310):

> "...(T)he onset of unemployment produces an immediate shock effect which is followed by a period of almost constructive adaptation in which some enjoy their free time and many engage in active job search; but deterioration follows quickly with boredom and declining self-respect ending in despair or fatalistic apathy."

This process can be broken down into a series of rather distinct phases to highlight the implications for policy.

(1) Anticipation, the first phase of adaptation and adjustment

A number of studies indicate that the anticipation of possible or probable job loss, as a result of the announcement of an impending plant closing, or as a result of seeing business fall-off and friends being laid-off, is frequently met with considerable fear, anxiety and uncertainty. (Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, 1938; Powell and Driscoll, 1973; Slote, 1969.) The potential magnitude of this anxiety may be implicated in the disturbing report by Slote (1969) that three of seven middle aged salesmen at a Detroit paint factory scheduled for shutdown died during the period between first notification of the impending closing and the actual closing two years later. One of these men was an apparent suicide. (It is noteworthy that in a study of 103 consecutive suicides among white males in New Orleans, (Breed, 1963) fully three-quarters of the cases had suffered some form of substantial worklife instability



or downward status mobility. Generally, studies of the unemployed (e.g., Powell and Driscoll, 1973; Zawadski and Lazarsfeld, 1935) indicate that widespread contemplation of suicide, and less frequently, actual attempts at suicide mainly characterize certain of the long term jobless during a phase of intense moodiness coming around six months after displacement.)

A very typical response to signs of impending termination is denial or disbelief. (Taber, Walsh and Cooke, 1979; Root, 1979.) Rumors of an "eleventh hour reprieve" tend to run high in plants threatened with shutdown. This avoidance response appears to have mostly negative long term consequences, in that it distracts the worker from the need to plan an effective course of action; it gives a false sense of security which reduces the likelihood of organized collective pressure on the company to provide for retraining and other support services; and it also reduces the rate of utilization of such services when they are provided.

Both anxiety and accompanying defensive responses of denial can be reduced through forthright and consistent dissemination of accurate information jointly prepared by management and unions, regarding plans for plant shutdown. However, management often avoids giving ample warning for fear of acts of sabotage and severe attrition of the labor force needed to maintain levels of production prior to closing. (Buss and Redburn, 1981) And unions often hesitate to admit their lack of success in maintaining security of employment for their

members. (See, for example, Slote, 1969.) Nonetheless, it should be recognized that well-coordinated plans for proactive services and benefits to workers facing displacement have been found to minimize negative consequences of shutdowns for all affected parties: workers, management, and unions.

Buss and Redburn (1981) develop a very persuasive case in support of a coordinated plant phase-out plan. They estimate that the precipitous closing of the Campbell Works of Youngstown Sheet and Tube, in which 4,000 displaced workers were given as little as three days prior notice of termination, resulted in the staggering sum of $183 million in unemployment and other benefits paid to the ill-prepared victims. By contrast, other companies such as Armour, have long pursued more responsible policies in their plant shutdowns to help workers train for and obtain new employment prior to a carefully timed and controlled sequence of termination, at vastly reduced costs to the corporation. (Stern, 1969)

The elements of a coordinated plan for plant shutdown are set forth by Buss and Redburn (1981). First, there should be early warning of the impending closure. Restriction of information has been found to increase stress and the likelihood of fighting back by angered workers. Second, the company should bring in to the plant career counseling experts to help workers find new employment through training in job search techniques. Better yet, the company can invite in personnel interviewers from similar companies which may have need for the displaced workers. Third, health insurance benefits should be extended to cover the post-termination period; otherwise, workers who stand to lose everything are likely to take out their anger on the company. The substantial costs of such a policy can be diffused through deferred payment plans in conjunction with a risk pool established by community agencies and private insurance companies. Fourth, job retraining programs may be useful - so long as they are based on careful needs assessments for the local labor market. Fifth, the company should offer liberal relocation benefits so that it may benefit from continued employment of its skilled labor pool.





Last, but not least, a planning council comprised of representatives of social service agencies, community leaders, union and management officials, and the media should be established to coordinate and integrate the planning and delivery of supportive services to displaced workers. Creation of an effective coordinating council of this sort is very difficult to accomplish in view of longstanding interorganizational competition and animosity. For example, Buss and Redburn (1980) describe the failed attempt to create an effective decision making seminar of leaders in the Youngstown, Ohio community. It is apparent that the creation and management of a highly complex and unwieldy structure of this sort demands the special expertise of very skilled outside organizational consultants, such as the team of social scientists from the Institute for Social Research which succeeded very nicely in putting together a workable Community Services Council for a city (Grand Rapids, Michigan?) faced with the closing of a large auto parts manu-

facturing plant. (Taber, Walsh, and Cooke, 1979.)

In sum, then, many things can be done to prevent or mollify the stress of job loss in anticipation of impending displacement of masses of workers. It is evident, however, from reports reviewed earlier that many workers displaced during the present recessionary period have not benefitted from the kinds of enlightened policies and programs recommended herein. As these workers suffer prolonged unemployment and underemployment, they are likely to move through the continuum of phases of adjustment to joblessness common to the long term unemployed. Even at this late point in time, ameliorative policies and programs can be targeted to these workers and the problems they will likely encounter. So we next examine the phase of adjustment subsequent to anticipation: job loss, and specify ameliorative interventions appropriate to problems encountered in this phase.

(2) Job loss; resolution of uncertainty

Briar (1978) refers to the phase immediately following upon job loss as the "mantle of optimism" phase, and Powell and Driscoll (1973) refer to it as the "period of relaxation and relief." The majority of workers apparently tend to respond to actual termination with relief at the resolution of the stressful uncertainties they tend to experience during the anticipation phase. Depending on the extent of their financial reserves, they may actually wait for some time before engaging in active vigorous job search; they may



even go on vacation as did 8 of the 58 displaced workers studied by Briar (1978). This period of relaxation may be helpful in recovering from the stress of anticipation and in building strength to confront the new stresses of job search. Not all workers respond this way to job loss, however. Those who most avidly denied the impending closing of the plant studied by Slote (1969) were characterized as "rigid and unadaptable types" who reacted to termination with shock and indignation. However, even these reactions may eventually give way to numbness and apathy, followed eventually by relatively calm adaptation and active job search. (Zawadski and Lazarsfeld, 1935.)

To repeat, during this initial period following termination, sometimes after a spate of relaxation most workers engage in concerted efforts to find another job. We suspect, however, that this may not be so true of some laid-off autoworkers. The fact is that massive auto industry layoffs in past years have generally been followed sooner or later by increased demand for automobiles and therefore for labor. It seems likely, therefore, that any tendency toward denial or avoidance of confrontation with the present day reality of serious damage to and technological change in the industry, which practically eliminates the possibility of recall for most workers, would be intensified by memories of industry recoveries in the past. For this group, the period of high anxiety and uncertainty coupled with denial, which generally

characterizes the "anticipation" phase, may be prolonged throughout the duration of eligibility for unemployment benefits.

Powell and Driscoll (1973) report that it is during this period of concerted job search effort, which lasts an average of three months, that friends and family give maximum support. Marital relations tend to remain as good as they have been generally, and wives often help their unemployed husbands in the job search. The supportiveness offered by friends and family is of utmost importance to the job seeker in this period. Powell and Driscoll comment:

> "Critical to the maintenance of a concerted effort is the capacity to avoid becoming overly depressed or anxious in the face of rejection letters from potential employers - or worse, no response at all. The unemployed person must bounce back quickly to remain active." (Powell and Driscoll, 1973, p. 19.)

With regard to help in "bouncing back," it has been found that blue-collar workers are far more inclined than white-collar workers to rely entirely on family and friends for emotional support, and to dismiss any value to services of professional mental health agencies. A study of mental health service utilization in Youngstown (Buss, 1980) found that displaced blue-collar workers generally knew of the availability and location of such services, but did not regard them as pertinent to their needs. As a result, there was no sign of the massive displacement of 4,000 workers from Youngstown Sheet and Tube in the client flow through local mental health agencies.

Workers without helpful friends and family may suffer needlessly as a result of their reluctance to use mental health



services. While it has been found that the probability of professional mental health utilization among the unemployed is inversely related to frequency of contact with close friends, there is evidence that those who do receive professional help have better morale than those who report wanting professional help but not receiving it. (Linn and McGranahan, 1980.) Buss and Redburn (1980) propose one possible proactive measure to reduce avoidance of professional help by blue-collar workers, and that is to introduce the workers to the availability and content of services through presentations given by agency staff at plants facing impending shutdown. After the fact of displacement, a media campaign to raise public awareness of benefits of such services may be in order.

Another perhaps more feasible solution is suggested by findings that paraprofessional counselors may be equally as effective in reduction of mental health symptomatology as are professional therapists, according to an exhaustive review of the literature by Durlak (1979). There have been efforts to implement this knowledge in centers servicing the needs of laid-off workers. A successful unemployment crisis center in Seattle staffed mainly by paraprofessional counselors ("Project Start-Up") is described by Briar (1978).

The United Auto Workers union has set up ten crisis centers for laid-off autoworkers, also staffed by paraprofessionals (more precisely, by laid-off autoworkers who have received short periods of training.) Evidence reviewed by Durlak suggests that these programmatic developments should be supported

and encouraged.

The most likely source of "paraprofessional" emotional support help may be the spouse or "significant other" of the laid-off worker. House (1981) reviewed studies examining social support and work stress, and found that the strongest buffering effects of social support on work stress come from a single other; support from additional others does not contribute much more to the reduction of stress. (House, 1981, p. 85.) As has been suggested earlier, however, marital counseling may be indicated for couples whose relationships tend to be tense and mutually unsupportive, even in good times.

Nonetheless there are instrumental and other benefits to be gained through social networks extending well beyond close kinship circles. Research by Granovetter (1973) on the "strength of weak ties" indicates that awareness of available job opportunities is maximized through maximally widely-cast contacts with acquaintances and friends. Granovetter remarks that "Labor economists have long been aware that blue-collar workers find out about new jobs more through personal contacts than by any other method....Recent studies suggest this is also true for those in professional, technical, and managerial positions..." (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1371.) Case studies of blue-collar unemployed by Bakke (1940, p. 269) and Sheppard (1965) confirm that the chances of successful re-employment are most enhanced through informal job seeking activity. Thus, unemployed workers should be encouraged to inform acquaintances of their employment needs; this may require some prompting since many of the unemployed try to keep



their situation "secret" in an effort to hide feelings of shame and humiliation. (Briar, 1978, p. 49.)

Social withdrawal and "secrecy" might be minimized in communities which are perceived to be sincerely concerned. Thus, Kasl, Gore and Cobb (1975) and Gore (1978) discovered that health impacts of unemployment were much lower for blue collar married men displaced as a result of a rural plant closing in contrast to men displaced in an urban plant closing. This was due, it was argued, to the lesser importance of the workplace as a source of social support for the men in the rural community, reflecting the cohesion of the largely Polish American ethnic community in the area. Moreover, the rural community responded to the threat to its economic base with an atmosphere of solidary concern not evident in the urban community. Further support for these dynamic processes is given in the finding that in the urban group there was a significant increase in dissatisfaction with perceived social support from anticipation to termination phases, in contrast to the experience of the rural men who reported a significant decrease in dissatisfaction with perceived social support over the same period. Moreover, individual patterns seen in a measure of negative stress reaction - "days saw doctor" - were positively related to level of dissatisfaction with social support. (Kasl, Gore, and Cobb, 1975; Gore, 1978.) In sum, then, this evidence points to the need to organize distressed communities to promote a positive supportive orientation to the problems of the unemployed.

Ferman (Ferman and Blehar, 1979) has suggested expanding

the notion of social support beyond emotional social support and informal job search networks to include the "irregular economy" and "functional" or instrumental support by family and others. The "irregular economy" (also called the "informal economy"; Jahoda, 1979) has been defined to include "work that is unrecorded and unmeasured by any private or public monitoring agency and which entails a cash exchange." (Dow, 1977, p. 111.) "Functional support involves doing things to help out," says Ferman (1979, p. 418); these things may include gifts and loans of money, loan of an automobile, babysitting help, doubling-up in homes of friends and relatives, sending other family members to work, and so on.

Unemployment, even when accompanied by unemployment benefits, tends to create financial hardship for families regardless of occupational level which they deal with both by cutting back on expenditures and by making efforts to generate additional resources. (Schlozman and Verba, 1979, pp. 90-91.) Schlozman and Verba (1979, p. 86.) found no particular pattern to what was cut back: "There seemed to be as many ways to cut back on expenses as there were respondents." Briar (1978, p. 53.) by comparison detected cutbacks generally being made in these items and according to these priorities: health insurance, beer and liquor, fire and life insurance, and telephone; and virtual elimination of the following items and activities was noted as well: clothing, going out, gifts, travel, entertaining at home, magazines and newspapers, and auto upkeep and repair. Thus it appears unfortunate that many potentially stress-re-





ducing items and activities have to be cut back, as well as resources which aid in the job search (e.g., newspapers, telephone and a well maintained auto). Schlozman and Verba note that as the length of unemployment increases, further efforts to cope are made primarily through further cuts in family spending and not through generating further resources. This may be due to the fact that the functional support system has already been taxed to its limit. Thus, Powell and Driscoll (1973, p. 19.) report that as continued efforts of the unemployed to find employment prove unsuccessful and the length of unemployment is prolonged, friends of the unemployed who were once helpful now begin to avoid them. It is also likely that insofar as occupational and skill level vary positively with the ability to successfully find "odd jobs" (Schlozman and Verba, 1979, p. 55.) which may include such activities as unlicensed plumbing, auto repair, carpentry, tax accounting (in the "irregular economy"), that the income-generating possibilities of these activities may quickly reach a maximum threshold for the lesser-skilled and lower status unemployed. Thus, there appear to be concrete limits to the amount and duration of extra-employment informally-generated resources for the unemployed.

In other pertinent findings, it has been found that while perceived adequate emotional and functional social support are strongly related to comparatively reduced economic worry and psychological moodiness among unemployed recipients of such support, the effectiveness of social support in reducing

these indicators of stress declines over time. Figueira-McDonough (1978, pp. 396-397.) concludes from her analysis of survey data on unemployed Detroiters:

> "(T)he groups most severely hit by unemployment (having been out of work for long periods of time and not expecting to be called back), even when receiving active support, report similar levels of dissatisfaction and negative moods as the group with unmet needs. Thus local services geared to active support, although the best palliative for the population in general, appear to be insufficient in cases of chronic unemployment."

Figueira-McDonough suggests that objective conditions which are very stressful, such as prolonged unemployment, are overwhelmingly stressful, and the only real solution is to change those objective conditions (i.e., obtain a job). Jahoda (1979) makes a similar point when she says that alternative social institutions such as school, voluntary work, and social clubs may satisfy some of the latent psychological functions of work, yet:

> "I know of none, however, in our society which combines them all and, in addition, has as compelling a manifest reason as making one's living. It is equally true that nobody prevents the unemployed from creating their own time structure and social contacts, from sharing goals and purposes with others or from exercising their skills as best they can. But the psychological input required to do so on a regular basis under one's own steam entirely, is colossal." (Jahoda, 1979, p. 313.)

In conclusion, while we agree with Figueira-McDonough that the negative psycho-social consequences of chronic unemployment are best resolved through re-employment, we disagree that the need for policies to provide formal supportive social services is therefore contraindicated for



the chronically unemployed. In the first place, as was stated earlier, the conservative ethos in present socio-political trends greatly reduces the likelihood of enactment of full employment policies, or even of expansion of work-relief programs. Second, as will be seen in the next section of the paper, prolonged unemployment often appears to give rise to symptoms of severe psychological distress, which are best treated by professional mental health workers. Such treatment may be indicated even in the event of re-employment, since the negative side-effects of prolonged unemployment are revealed to be quite enduring in many cases.

(3) Adaptations to prolonged unemployment: a proliferation of negative stress reactions

When attempts to secure re-employment are unsuccessful for four or more months subsequent to termination, evidence of serious personality and social disorganization begins to emerge. (Powell and Driscoll, 1973.) Studies have found that some of the unemployed during this stage of adaptation increasingly suffer from intense moodiness, anxiety, and despair; erratic behavior; feelings of panic, rage, self-doubt and self-criticalness; social withdrawal; escape into drunkenness; deep and potentially suicidal depression; and marital disorganization. (Powell and Driscoll, 1973; Zawadski and Lazarsfeld, 1935; Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, 1938.) This period of "vacillation and doubt" lasts from one to three months and gives way to a final period of "malaise and cynicism", marked by stabilization of mood swings and of interpersonal relations but also bringing increased apathy,

listlessness, resignation, and fatalistic helplessness. (Powell and Driscoll, 1973; Zawadski and Lazarsfeld, 1935; Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, 1938.)

It is very difficult to ascertain from the literature exactly what proportion of the unemployed are likely to evince the more extreme symptoms of psychological distress noted here. Clearly the likelihood of serious psychological deterioration for any particular individual depends upon the variety of predisposing and mediating factors that have been examined in the analysis.

Accurate needs assessments for intervention are made very difficult by the fact that many of the unemployed become quite alienated and refuse to participate in research studies. Worse yet, this tendency appears to increase as a function of the length of unemployment. Thus, Komarovsky (1940, p. 7.) acknowledges that 10 of 89 families contacted refused to participate in the study. Slote (1969, pp. 241-242.) notes that he was able to secure the cooperation of only 58 of the 120 displaced blue-collar workers whom he solicited, and comments that many of those who refused seemed to take the plant closing especially hard. Similarly, longitudinal panel studies of the unemployed steelworkers by Buss in Youngstown, Ohio, and of unemployed Detroiters by Ferman et al (1980) have been marred by initial refusal rates of at least 20 percent, and the further attrition of half of the remaining respondents over time. Buss comments (personal communication) that approximately 10 percent of the attrition has been due to migration from the area; the remainder is due to tremendous alienation as revealed





in remarks made to the unsuccessful interviewers. In order to plan for provision of adequate treatment services, then, it appears that estimates of the absolute and relative numbers of unemployed at risk of psychological or other disability would have to be culled from intake statistics at treatment agencies and from other official statistics, and adjusted for known rates of underreporting as well as under-utilization of services which may be inferred from epidemiological studies on other populations.

Indications of high levels of alienation among study non-respondents, as noted, may plausibly be regarded as evidence of a generalized tendency toward social withdrawal and isolation. The literature is replete with observations of social withdrawal among the unemployed. (Bakke, 1940; Jahoda, 1979; Komarovsky, 1940; Pope, 1964; Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, 1938.) Importantly, social isolation is known to be psychologically debilitating and to decrease one's ability to withstand stresses. (Linn and McGranahan, 1980.) Reflecting on consequences of social withdrawal among the families he studied during the Depression, Bakke observes:

> "Those men and women and children impressed one as secure and most thoroughly motivated toward self reliance who...were geared into the life of their community. The degree of their insecurity and the loss of their desire to be self-reliant appeared to be almost directly proportional to the extent of the breaking of those ties." (Bakke, 1949, p. 304.)

In a study of the long term repercussions of unemployment on levels of social participation, Pope (1964) speculates that displacement results in the loss of job based friends, of the network of contacts maintained through

participation in the union, and of long range time perspectives and feelings of security which normally enable broader goals and interests and thus more widespread social contacts. Further, unemployment results in feelings of shame as well as loss of prestige which lead to lessened social interaction and loss of social skills. Pope comments:

> "The unemployed isolate has little practice in interacting, cannot keep abreast of the current gossip among his former friends, and is always afraid that his lack of work may be mentioned and cause him embarrassment. A vicious circle develops in which the unemployed worker increasingly withdraws from social contact, becomes more isolated and more uneasy in social situations, withdraws further, and so on." (Pope, 1964, p. 291.)

Pope further hypothesizes that decreased social interaction will persist into the indefinite future as a result of loss of social skills and lack of motivation to seek social contacts.

Pope (1964) tested these hypotheses using a stratified, purposive, homogeneous sample of older, high seniority, blue-collar and lower white-collar men employed in a Detroit auto parts manufacturing poant. A measure of "cumulative economic deprivation" was created, representing the total cumulative number of months of unemployment ever experienced by the respondent. His analyses found that cumulative economic deprivation was inversely related to social participation in formal groups (e.g., attendance at formal voluntary associations, union meetings, and church services) for certain subgroups: the higher educated, younger, and higher income respondents. There was no relation for more poorly educated, older, and



lower income workers. Pope explains that, in the first case, higher educated and high income workers who have suffered unemployment become particularly cynical, for instance, with regard to the union's ability to retain jobs. In the second case, it was found that rates of participation in formal groups by more poorly educated, older and lower income workers were so low anyway that cumulative economic deprivation could not make any difference.

An analysis of informal association with kin found an inverse relationship with cumulative economic deprivation, especially for men who spent their teenage years (during the Depression) growing up in Detroit. He comments that "It is probable that with respect to one's relatives losing one's job is felt to be shameful." (Pope, 1964, p. 297.) By contrast, it was found that there was no relation between economic deprivation and association with non-kin. Pope (1964), Briar (1978), and Bakke (1940) observe that while the unemployed withdraw from contact with many old friends, they tend (eventually) to create new friendships with persons similarly deprived. Sometimes they join together to form mutual self-help associations which the members find tremendously supportive. (Maurer, 1979; Briar, 1978; Bakke, 1940.)

Liem and Liem (1979) review evidence suggesting that what unemployment changes is who is looked upon as a friend. To some undetermined extent, these processes may reflect

"therapeutic withdrawal" from social networks which themselves were a source of stress. (Tolsdorf, 1976.) But they may also reflect predispositions toward "negative network orientations" or low levels of interpersonal trust which are developed early in childhood in response to hostile, belligerant or uninvolved parents. (Tolsdorf, 1976.) This latter response predisposition tends to unselectively insulate the individual from potential sources of support.

Drinking may be seen as a behavioral coping response reflecting in similar ways negative processes of "escapism" which can create new stresses, rather more ambiguously evaluated processes of "social facilitation", or positive processes of increased emotionally supportive social interaction (drinking for "social convivial" reasons). M. Harvey Brenner (1975) has discerned through aggregate time series analyses that per capita alcohol consumption increases within months of any given economic downturn, and that most of this increase is accounted for by greater consumption of distilled spirits. He finds lagged effects (lagged from one to two years behind the economic downturn) for increases in arrest rates for public drunkenness and driving while intoxicated, and for first admissions to mental hospitals for alcoholic psychosis and other alcohol-related mental disorders. He is careful, however, not to frame his interpretation of these results in moralistic overtones:

> "The data of the present study suggest that alleviation of the effects and aftermath of economic stress may be a stronger stimulus to drinking than the punishing effects subsequent to heavy drinking are inhibiting." (Brenner, 1975, p. 1290.)



Supporting this interpretation is evidence from a study by Pearlin and Radabaugh (1976) which found that poor people who display high anxiety over perceived financial inadequacy are most likely to have a low sense of mastery over the environment and to suffer low self-esteem and to use alcohol to cope.

Case studies provide more direct but delimited evidence of patterns of increased, decreased, and unchanged consumption among unemployed respondents. (Bakke, 1940; Briar, 1978; Cavan, 1959; Cavan and Ranck, 1938; Elder and Rockwell, 1979; Komarovsky, 1940; Zawadski and Lazarsfeld, 1935; Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, 1938.) The survey of laid-off auto workers in Ypsilanti, Michigan conducted by Landau et al (1980) provides the most suggestive indications of the proportions of workers falling into each category of changes in drinking behavior subsequent to job loss: 19 percent reported drinking "more"; 33 percent reported "no change or less often"; and 48 percent reported they "don't drink" (a statistic of dubious reliability and validity). The authors report that respondents with high levels of measured depression were overrepresented among those who reported drinking at all. The case studies also generally observe that exceptionally distressed persons with a predisposition toward heavy drinking increase their drinking in response to joblessness. Several authors comment on the stress-reinforcing consequences of this coping response,

insofar as it appears to hinder re-employment and interfere with responsible parenting and good marital relations. Ironically, however, it seems that re-employment may cure the problem, or at least bring it under control. E. E. LeMasters (1975) observed changes in drinking patterns among skilled blue collar workers who became unemployed:

> "They tend to drink more when they don't work. Many of these men have what might be called "a drinking problem," which they control, at least in part, by not drinking on the job eight hours a day, five days a week. Unemployment upsets the delicate balance of their drinking program - partly because they spend more time at the tavern when they are not working." (LeMasters, 1975, p. 26.)

Thus, as has been noted in regard to other secondary problems caused by job loss, the most direct and immediate "cure" in this case may be re-employment, or prevention of the job loss in the first place. Failing this, treatment for alcoholism seems to be indicated.

There is insufficient evidence reported in the literature on unemployment to confirm or disconfirm our hypotheses that some of the jobless who drink for facilitative or convivial reasons may benefit from increased social interaction. The best evidence that we have to support these hypotheses is indirect. In a study of life among blue-collar steelworkers and their social relations in Chicago, Kornblum (1974) observes:

> "In their homes, blue collar families most often associate with relatives and friends of long standing who are free to drop in at almost any time. Invitations to other neighborhood friends are reserved for special occasions in the life cycle, such as



> marriage, birth, death, or important holidays during the year. Thus the tavern is among the most important of neighborhood institutions where people can form and maintain friendships with others whom they know well but may not associate with at home. This is especially true of friendships formed at work which may reach across ethnic or terrirorial divisions in the neighborhood or the larger community." (Kornblum, 1974, pp. 80-81.)

This evidence, when combined with the finding reported by Pope (1964) noting that the unemployed tend to withdraw from social participation with kin but maintain social participation with non-kin, tends to lend some persuasiveness to our speculations that increased drinking among some responsents may in fact represent increased social interaction, with attendant potential benefits to be gained through emotional as well as functional or instrumental social support.

D. Suggestions for further research: an agenda

There is a further need for high-quality qualitative research on the unemployed. The most recent book-length case studies are written by journalists (Slote, 1969; Maurer, 1979), and while informative, they lack the methodological rigor and depth expected of scientific research. The experience of today's unemployed may vary im important ways from what was observed in the many case studies conducted during the Depression. A special interest of ours is qualitative research to test our hypotheses about drinking habits among the unemployed.

Studies focusing on unemployed women are nearly nonexistent, and in view of enormous increases in labor force participation rates of women as well as in the incidence of female single parent households, further neglect of the study of unemployed women is inexcusable. Research reviewed in this paper authored by Moen (1979) and Warren (1979) point to extraordinary hardships befalling unemployed women, and especially single women with dependent young children. The fact that this literature review centered around the problems facing unemployed men merely reflects the overwhelming bias of the research literature.

Studies conducted on existing or new longitudinal and cross-sectional data are indicated, to better specify the characteristics of people that predispose them to job loss



and to unemployment stress and stress reactions. A particular area of interest is the impact of mass layoff; there are plenty of research subjects available if some means can be discovered to enhance their cooperation (such as cash payments for participation.)

As Jeanne Gordus (1979) has noted, the existing research literature simply is not adequate to serve as a basis for accurate needs assessments and policy formulation. Thus further research efforts should attend not only to personal characteristics of the jobless and those at risk, but equally important is attention to the mediating and predisposing impacts of contextual factors, such as: city size, region, and composition of the industrial base; governmental health and economic policy; community integration; types of industries affected, their ownership patterns and factors entering into decisions to close or relocate plants; the internal organization and structure of industrial work forces (after Sclar, 1978). These kinds of research topics and variables will provide insights into comparative and socio-historical patterns and experiences of unemployment across place and time.

## III. Policy and Program Recommendations

Negative consequences arising from job loss may be minimized or eliminated in two basic ways: (1) Through prevention, or elimination of the stressor event itself, or; (2) Through buffering the stress via mechanisms of functional and emotional support. From the standpoint of the affected individual, prevention of job loss, or rapid re-employment, are certainly the preferred solutions.

It can also be argued that society as a whole would benefit from commitment to a full employment policy, for two reasons. First, job loss and prolonged unemployment entail considerable economic and social costs to society as a result of the loss of productive resources of labor through labor force non-participation and individual dysfunction. (Brenner, 1977.) Second, the disproportionate negative impacts of massive unemployment befalling already disadvantaged sectors of the labor force are offensive to principles of social justice and equity. Hence, policy initiatives to prevent or eliminate unemployment necessarily take first priority. Recognizing that such policy initiatives may not be implemented, either in general or in specific cases, then ameliorative policies should be adopted to minimize the negative consequences of job loss affecting individuals and their families, and the communities they live in.



### A. Preventive policy options

The following policy options are recommended to prevent job loss or to provide rapid re-employment in times of economic crisis.

-- A national "full employment" policy, to commit policymakers to maintain levels of unemployment not to exceed a set rate which provides for a reasonable amount of slack in the labor market. The full employment policy may be enforced through fiscal and monetary initiatives aimed at preventing or shortening recessions, and through promotion of counter-cyclical public employment programs and private sector employment programs subsidized through tax credits and other means. (Moen, 1979.)

-- Economic assistance in the form of grants and loans to prevent plant closings. A notable precedent has been set by the provision of Federally-guaranteed loans to Chrysler Corporation. In many cases, corporations are unwilling to operate viable plants because they yield only marginal profits; these are prime targets for government-subsidized purchase and operation by employees and the communities they live in. (Blasi, 1979.) Such measures have the advantage for the taxpayer of saving tremendous amounts of money paid out in unemployment compensation, welfare and health services, and job re-training programs. Enactment of federal laws requiring advance notification of business closing or

relocation is needed to enable the prompt, smooth transfer of ownership and operation. Community task forces should be created to bargain with company management and government officials in the purchase of facilities. (Blasi, 1979.)

-- Work-sharing as an alternative to mass layoff. During the 1975 recession companies in many Western European countries cut back the hours of all workers rather than laying-off certain individuals. Partial unemployment compensation was provided to make-up for up to 65 percent of wages lost due to fewer hours worked. (Moen, 1979.) California enacted a law in 1978 permitting an employer, with the consent of workers and the union, to implement work sharing and partial unemployment insurance in lieu of layoffs. Workers may benefit from increased job security, employers from retention of skilled labor, and the union from retention of dues-paying members. (Shostak, 1980, p. 31.)

-- Promotion of inter- and intra-union cooperation in the re-employment and relocation of displaced workers across industries and regions. Shostak (1980) has noted an oft-reported lack of solidary cooperation among union locals and across unions in assisting workers to find new employment. National union leaders can make stronger efforts to promote working class solidarity and interests by decreasing intra- and inter-union competition and conflict, in recognition of their responsibilities to a broader constituency. The planned merger of the UAW and the AFL-CIO is a move in this direction.



-- Collective bargaining agreements to provide for the eventuality of plant shutdown or relocation. A pre-planned contingency plan for handling a possible shutdown or mass layoff has benefits for the corporation, in the saving of money paid out in benefits, continuation of productivity levels up to the moment of closing, retention of skilled labor, reduction of sabotage, and strengthening of the corporate public image. Organized labor benefits in obvious ways as well, in particular, through relief of uncertainties arising from notice of impending shutdown, and through instrumental protective devices to ensure employment security, rapid re-employment, and/or financial security and adequacy. The collective bargaining agreement should include clauses requiring advance notice of plans for shutdown or mass layoff, providing for negotiation of possible transfer of ownership to workers and/or the community where feasible as an alternative to shutdown. Also needed is severance pay with bonuses keyed to the desirable layoff schedule. Extension of health insurance policies is desirable, as well as creation of "portable pensions." Commitments by the employer should be obtained to assist workers and the community to find other potential purchasers and uses for plant facilities, and to cooperate with a community social services task force in planning and coordinating services to be introduced to workers within the plant prior to closing (described below).

B. Ameliorative policy options

Planners of ameliorative interventions should be cognizant of population subgroups most at risk of displacement, prolonged unemployment, and downward status mobility during economic downturns as well as in good economic times. These groups include: (1) Female heads of household with young dependent children; (2) Young male heads of household with young dependent children; (3) Older middle aged workers; (4) Blue collar workers, especially those with low levels of skill or other human capital; (5) Racial minority group workers.

Ameliorative policy and program interventions may be seen as providing either formal or informal support, and further distinctions may be seen with regard to the provision of instrumental or functional support services, and psychological support services.

1. Instrumental or functional support

-- Creation of a community services task force. The task force may be modeled after the successful effort by Taber, Walsh, and Cooke (1979) to implement a council comprised of representatives of company management, union officials, social service agency planners, and the media, whose purpose was to maximize the efficient and effective delivery of social services to masses of workers about to be displaced as a result of a plant closing. The jobless often require a multiplicity of



services, including: economic support; job counseling, placement, and training; childcare; and mental and physical health care. Coordination of services is important to economically distressed communities, which can ill-afford duplication of services or other inefficiencies in these helping efforts directed toward the unemployed. An integrated, proactive implementation plan, introducing the services to workers within the plant prior to closing, has been found to be most effective in meeting the needs of workers, management, service agencies, and the community as a whole. Agencies can share information and coordinate efforts to locate and secure special governmental funding. Organized community pressure can be focused through this mechanism to bring about cooperation on the part of company management.

-- Extension of supplemental unemployment benefits to the 90 percent of private sector employees not now covered. SUB benefits provide up to 95 percent of after-tax wages, and effectively eliminate the stress of economic deprivation in the event of limitied or indefinite layoff. (Shostak, 1980, p. 31.)

-- Relocation assistance by companies and the government. As it is now, jobless workers living in depressed labor market areas receive little if any help in paying the considerable costs incurred in efforts to move to other areas with better opportunities. Relocation grants or loans could

be subsidized with Federal monies and administered through MESC. There are trade-offs to be considered, however, with regard to the loss to the afflicted community of a skilled labor force needed for eventual economic recovery. (Redburn and Buss, 1979.)

-- Relaxation of financial eligibility requirements for receipt of food stamps, welfare, and other income supports. At present, displaced workers and their familes must first sell-off their assets before becoming eligible for financial and in-kind support. It seems patently unfair to require a worker who is displaced through no fault of his own to impoverish himself before receiving assistance.

-- Child care services for single heads of household. Moen (1979) notes that child care responsibilites ean interfere gravely with the ability of single parents to conduct a thorough job search, thereby increasing the likelihood of prolonged unemployment and hardship. Subsidies for private child care or provision of public child care centers is indicated for this group.

-- Formation of job search clubs. Washtenaw County Community Mental Health has operated a "job club" for several years, providing a supportive time and task-structured environment which has been found to be very helpful to job seekers. Led by a trained group facilitator, individuals in these clubs learn and practice effective job search techniques, while at the same time receiving emotional support to help cope with



frustrations and anxieties. (Michigan Department of Mental Halth, 1980.)

-- Promotion of mutual self-help associations among the unemployed. These exchange and reciprocity networks provide both instrumental and emotional social support, including sharing of child care burdens, transportation, job leads, skills and labor, loans and gifts, and so on, thus resembling a microcosm of the "irregular" or "informal" economy described by Dow (1977) and Jahoda (1979). Beyond instrumental support, social interaction in these groups provides evaluative feedback and emotional support to aid in coping.

-- Job re-training programs. Job re-training needs to be provided to displaced workers with few saleable skills, such as many of the auto workers laid-off during the present recession. The content of the training must be based on a careful needs assessment of the local labor market.

2. Psychological support services

-- Promotion of specialized unemployment crisis centers. Workers who might otherwise avoid seeking needed professional mental health care more readily utilize services of centers which are created especially for their needs. (Little, 1976; Briar, 1978.) The UAW, with the help of the Federal government, has established ten crisis centers to help workers laid-off during the current recession. Funding is due to

expire shortly and pressure should be applied to ensure its continuance.

-- Mental health treatment modalities must be attuned to stresses and stress reactions peculiar to unemployment. Clinical social workers and other professional therapists generally have received inadequate training with regard to the stresses and stress reactions endemic to unemployment. Oftentimes treatment modalities reveal poor understanding of the importance of work in re-establishing the unemployed worker's social and psychological equilibrium. (Ginsberg, 1975.) Ginsberg comments: "Although specialists (in the manpower field) may differ on specific alternatives (e.g., provisions for training or for subsidies to employers of less productive workers), all agree that the solution is work. Social work, on the other hand, has tended to be ambivalent about the importance of work." (Ginsberg, 1975, p. 29.) Treatment interventions should thus be re-oriented toward enhancing the client's chances for re-employment; for instance, by focusing esteem support to help confront the stresses of job search. Particular attention should be given to marital counseling since unemployment often leads to marital tension. Promoting attribution of blame to elements of the environment (e.g., to high rates of unemployment) is one way to reduce the learned helplessness response, bolster worker self-esteem, and reduce marital friction. (Caplan, 1979.)

-- Public education campaigns to raise awareness and sensitivity



to problems of the unemployed. Many studies have shown that social withdrawal in the face of indifferent or hostile friends, neighbors, relatives, and acquaintances leads to additional stress and stress reaction on the part of the unemployed. On the other hand, perception by the unemployed of community concern has been seen to substantially buffer the stress of job loss. (Gore, 1978.)

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